

fetch Soma from the heaven, there occurred bad omens for the gods, one of them being that the missile (*praharaṇam*) of the Rudras clashed with those of the Vasus, the Ādityas, the Sādhyas, the Maruts and the other hosts of gods (*ye cānye devatāgaṇāḥ*); such a thing had never happened before 1. 26. 29-30.

**Rudrāstra, Raudra astra** nt. : Name of a missile, special to Rudra (Śiva).

**A. Description** : Heavenly (*divya*) 12. 5. 13-14; great (*mahāstra*) 3. 170. 38; fierce (*ghora*) 3. 170. 40; 7. 53. 43; eternal (*sanātana*) 3. 170. 40; destroyer of all enemies (*sarvāmitravinaśana*) 3. 170. 38; no other weapon superior to it (*anuttama*) 8. 66. 57.

**B. Identified with the Pāśupata (and the Brahmaśiras?)** : When Arjuna prayed to Śiva to give him the divine missiles, he agreed to Arjuna's request and told him that his Raudra missile would wait on him; he then gave him his Pāśupata 3. 163. 47-48; Brahmaśiras missile, which Arjuna received from Rudra, also called Raudra (or adj. 'fierce' of Brahmaśiras (?)) 3. 41. 8.

**C. Known to Arjuna** : Arjuna's collection of missiles (*astragrāma* 5. 166. 32) included Raudra astra 3. 89. 10-11; Arjuna had received it from Rudra 7. 53. 43; 12. 5. 13-14, and he wanted to use it against the Kauravas at the time of the cattle-raid 4. 56. 14.

**D. Mode of use** : At the time of using it (against Karṇa), Arjuna recited the *mantras* (*amanantrya*) on the arrow on which he employed it 8. 66. 58; at the time of charging his arrow with the missile (to release it against the Pauloma and the Kālakeya demons) Arjuna bowed down to Rudra (*rudrāya praṇato raṇe*) and wished well to the creatures (*svasti bhūtebhyah*); he bowed down to Śarva (Rudra) again when he actually

released the missile from the bow (*namaskṛtvā trinetṛāya śarvāyāmitatejase*) 3. 170. 38, 41. E. Uses : 1. In the epic war : (i) Arjuna wanted to employ it on a heavenly arrow, resembling fire or snake's poison and which was hard like a stone, and release it against Karṇa 8. 66. 58-59; there is no mention of Arjuna having released it, but it seems that he warded off Karṇa's Brahmāstra with it (not named; *tad astram astrenāvārya prajāhārāsyā paṇḍavaḥ*) 8. 67. 8; (ii) Aśvatthāman killed the followers of Dhṛṣṭadyumna who surrounded him after he killed Dhṛṣṭadyumna at night in the camp of the Pāṇḍavas 10. 8. 31-32; 2. Outside the epic war : (i) Arjuna used it to burn with its fire the Nivātakavaca demons 5. 136. 7; (ii) Arjuna used it to kill the Pauloma and the Kālakeya demons; Arjuna first used all his other missiles without being able to defeat the demons, but was himself oppressed by them; at that time he was afraid; he bowed to Rudra and employed the great Raudra missile on his arrow (*mahāstram samayojayam*); he then saw a man having three heads, nine eyes, three mouths, six hands, burning, his hair bright like the sun or fire, his head covered with big snakes (*tato paśyam trisirasam puruṣam navalocanam | trimukham śaḍbhujam dīptam arka-jvalanamūrdhajam || lelihanair mahānāgaibh kṛtaśirṣam*) 3. 170. 38-39; when the missile was next actually released (*muktamātre tatas tasmīn*) thousands of different shapes — wild animals like lions, tigers, bears, buffalos, as also snakes, cows, elephants, *śṛmaras*, *śarabhas*, bulls, boars, wild cats, *śālāvṛkas*, ghosts, *bhuruṇḍas*, vultures, eagles, crocodiles, Piśācas, Yakṣas, demons, Guhyakas, Nairṛtas, big fishes having mouths of elephants, owls, hosts of fishes and tortoises, shapes holding